

JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

2011 Executive Order 29 Recommendation #1

Veterans Designation on Virginia Driver's License

1. **OBJECTIVE:** To provide a simple, ready means of identification for Virginia's veterans.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
  - Retired service personnel, including those that are medically retired, receive a United States Uniformed Services Identification Card (DD Form 2 (Retired)).
  - All other veterans who have served in the active military, naval, or air service and who have been released there from under conditions other than dishonorable receive a Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214) as evidence of their service and a Discharge Certificate. Neither of these documents are suitable substitutes for an identification card.
  - Veterans who receive medical care through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs receive a veterans identification card. However, only 15% of Virginia's veterans qualify for USDVA medical care.
3. **DISCUSSION:**
  - Those veterans who wish to prove veterans status, but who lack government-issued identification (ID) cards, are obligated to produce their DD 214 or other discharge papers, which are not documents that conveniently can be carried on a daily basis.
  - A method of honoring Virginia's veterans and providing them with a convenient ID would be to add their veterans service status to their Virginia Drivers License or to their state-issued ID if the veteran so requests. Other states have implemented this feature, most recently North Carolina and Utah.
  - Each time a Virginia veteran uses a driver's license or state ID, the veteran's honorable service to Virginia and the Nation would be easily and immediately recognized.
  - A veterans indicator on a driver's license or state ID would help qualify for commercial discounts (restaurants and other stores) or other cost saving features (such as free access to Virginia's parks or reduced fishing license fees).
  - Having a veterans identifier on state driver's licenses could help law enforcement when officers come across a veteran in a tense situation where the veteran may be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other emotional battle scars. The knowledge can be used by law enforcement to decrease the volatility of a potentially dangerous situation.
  - Adding a veterans service designation to the Virginia Driver's License would be a way of giving veterans a recognizable distinction whenever their state ID is used and would be further proof that Virginia is the most veterans friendly state in the Nation.
  - Veterans requesting the designation would need to show their DD-214 as evidence of their service and their discharge. Active Duty, Retired, or members of the National Guard or Reserve would present their current military ID.
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** The JLC recommends that the Governor and General Assembly enact legislation that would authorize a veterans designator on Virginia Drivers Licenses and ID cards.